

Written Analysis: *Doctor Faustus*

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Error and Sweet Violence: Shakespeare and Renaissance Comedy and Tragedy
(HPEN5033, HPEN6033)

DR. Peter Mitchell
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Title Transcription

THE/ TRAGICAL/ HISTORY / OF / D.FAUSTUS/ *As it hath bene Aeted by the Right/*
Honorable the Earle of Nottingham his servants / Written by Ch. Marl. [rule] LONDON /
 Printed by V.S for Thomas Bufhell / 1604.

Format: The format the play was originally printed was in Quarto, a name that characterizes the format and also the size of the book. This means that the printing was made in four pages each side of a sheet of paper, front an back, and then folding the sheet twice each time and folding against the long side. Resulting on eight pages pruned on on sheet of paper¹. This format of printing was fairly common in the Early Modern Period, it was an easier way for small publications although a quarto playbook could require up to a dozen or more sheets of paper to produce the entirety of the play².

Bookseller: Thomas Bushelll

Thomas Bushell was a bookseller that prior to owning his bookshop, was under an the apprenticeship of Nicholas Ling from possibly the years of 1590 to 1598 of from 1591 to 1599³. his parentage is partially unknown, his father was a tailor called Robert, but no one knows about hi mother⁴. In 1601 Thomas Bushell made a record of the play DR. Faustus in

¹ *Folger Shakespeare Library*, edt.by Lynch Kathleen and DeCamillis Justine
<https://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeare-in-print/diy-quarto/>

² *Folger Shakespeare Library*, edt.by Lynch Kathleen and DeCamillis Justine
<https://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeare-in-print/diy-quarto/>

³ McKerrow, *Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers, 1557-1640.*, p.58

⁴ McKerrow, *Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers, 1557-1640.*, p.58

the Stationers' Register. The Register contented the information that he transferred his rights of the play to John Wright.⁵

Printer: V.S, allegedly Valentine Simmes

Valentine Simmes or V.S was a printer that initiated his career as an apprentice of a bookseller called Henry Sutton, who then sent Valentine Simmes to work for Henry Bynneman, a printer that than passed away in the year of 1580⁶. Valentine was born in Adderbury, a village in northern Oxfordshire and his father was a sheerer⁷.

Simmes could be considered a controversial figure. Besides the fact that he would publish certain plays that were considered inappropriate without the playwright's consent, He was also arrested in 1589, alongside other 13 compositors at Martin Marprelate Press. The authorities then seized his printer and types, with the latter being melted. He was also then forced to transfer his learning to another printer called James Robert.⁸ In 1599 he was then listed as one of the fourteen printers who were forbidden to print any satyres and epigraphs.⁹ He worked for a printer in 1610 called Whitefriars and in 1619 he had to hand over some of his copywirthes to a man named Edward Griffin¹⁰. Simmes then published in his press plays that are known until this day not only byshcorlar but the general public. Plays such as King Henry IV, first edition, and Much Ado about Nothing, also first edition, both plays written by Shakespeare¹¹. However, in 1622 he was then forbidden from becoming a master printer.

⁵ Arber, *A Transcript of the Stationers' Registers, 1554-1640.*,

⁶ McKerrow, *Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers, 1557-1640.*, p.245-246

⁷ McKerrow, *Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers, 1557-1640.*, p.245-246

⁸ McKerrow, *Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers, 1557-1640.*, p.245-246

⁹ McKerrow, *Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers, 1557-1640.*, p.245-246

¹⁰ McKerrow, *Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers, 1557-1640.*, p.245-246

¹¹ McKerrow, *Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers, 1557-1640.*, p.245-246

Printer George Eld

Fathered by John Eld, an allegedly carpenter from Derby, George Eld was a printer who started his apprenticeship under the teachings of the printer Robert Bolton, he remained there for 8 years until his so-called freedom in either 1599 or 1600¹². After that he then became a printer at the Printers Press on Fleet Lane between the years of 1604 to 1624¹³.

Versions of the play Dr.Faustus

The most important versions of this play were the ones from 1604 and 1616, also called text A and Text B. Text A, also known as the version of 1604, was the one transcribed by the bookseller Thomas Bushell during a performance by the Admirals' men¹⁴. The play had only 1485 words making the play by Christopher Marlowe relatively short when compared to other Renaissance plays¹⁵. However, Text B, the version published in 1616, did not possess around thirty five words from Text A and also had some significant number of lines that were changed by other writers, which consequently also changed the message of the text and its interpretation by the audience.¹⁶

¹² McKerrow, *Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers, 1557-1640.*, p.98

¹³ McKerrow, *Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers, 1557-1640.*, p.98

¹⁴ Marlowe, Christopher (1962). *Doctor Faustus, A- and B-texts (1604, 1616)*. eds. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen. Manchester: University of Manchester P. pp. 72–73

¹⁵ Marlowe, Christopher (1962). *Doctor Faustus, A- and B-texts (1604, 1616)*. eds. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen. Manchester: University of Manchester P. pp. 72–73

¹⁶ Marlowe, Christopher (1962). *Doctor Faustus, A- and B-texts (1604, 1616)*. eds. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen. Manchester: University of Manchester P. pp. 72–73

Performance

Although it is not exactly known when *Dr. Faustus* was performed the first time, it is believed that it happened while its author, Christopher Marlowe, was still alive even though the publication of the play occurred in 1604 eleven years after Marlowe's death in 1593¹⁷. The first recorded performance was in 1594 by the actors of the company The Admiral's men after the reopening of the theaters, since a plague had taken over during the years of 1592 until 1594.¹⁸ *Dr. Faustus* was then performed around twelve times during the years of 1592 until 1595, by the same company. It was second only to another of Marlowe's plays, *Tamburlaine*, and the *Wise Men of Westchester*, a play with unknown authorship. *Dr. Faustus* was consistently performed until 1597¹⁹

Admiral's Men

The acting company was originally called the Lord's Howard's Men, named after their patron, Charles Howard, the Earl of Nottingham and also Baron of Howard of Effingham, a cousin of Anne Boleyn.²⁰ This acting company was quite successful, from its formation in 1570 until 1587 when one performer of the name Edward Allen joined the Admiral's Men²¹. After that the company then relocated to Philip Henslowe's Rose Theatre which initiated a long lasting relationship with Henslowe²². Edward Alleyn was an

¹⁷ Cambridge Authors, *Marlowe: The Fortunes of Dr. Faustus*
<https://www.english.cam.ac.uk/cambridgeauthors/marlowe-fortunes-of-faustus/#:~:text=In%20the%201594%2D1595%20season,subject%20of%20superstition%20and%20legend.>

¹⁸ Cambridge Authors, *Marlowe: The Fortunes of Dr. Faustus*
<https://www.english.cam.ac.uk/cambridgeauthors/marlowe-fortunes-of-faustus/#:~:text=In%20the%201594%2D1595%20season,subject%20of%20superstition%20and%20legend.>

¹⁹ Cambridge Authors, *Marlowe: The Fortunes of Dr. Faustus*
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²⁰ Cerasano, S. P. 2005. "Edward Alleyn, the New Model Actor, and the Rise of the Celebrity in the 1590s." *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 18: 47–59.

²¹ Cerasano, S. P. 2005. "Edward Alleyn, the New Model Actor, and the Rise of the Celebrity in the 1590s." *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 18: 47–59.

²² Cerasano, S. P. 2005. "Edward Alleyn, the New Model Actor, and the Rise of the Celebrity in the 1590s." *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 18: 47–59.

important figure to the company, since it was due to his presence that a lot of the audience was brought to the theaters to watch the plays²³. He was born in the year of 1566 and originally acted in the company of William Somerset, Earl of Worcester and then moved to the Admiral's Men²⁴. Alleyn also married Henslowe's step daughter Joan Woodward. The men had a very fruitful relationship.²⁵

²³ Cerasano, S. P. 2005. "Edward Alleyn, the New Model Actor, and the Rise of the Celebrity in the 1590s." *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 18: 47–59.

²⁴ Armstrong, William A. 1954. "Shakespeare and the Acting of Edward Alleyn." *Shakespeare Survey* 7: 82–89. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521064201.008>

²⁵ Cerasano, S. P. 2005. "Edward Alleyn, the New Model Actor, and the Rise of the Celebrity in the 1590s." *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 18: 47–59.

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McKerrow, *Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers, 1557-1640.*, p.98